

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 CU-04

AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /109 W  
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R 312225Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 835

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5367

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJ: UNIVERSITY STUDENT ELECTIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY. UNIVERSITY STUDENT ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT BOLIVIA DURING LATTER PART OF SEPTEMBER. AT PRESENT, MNR AND REMAINDER OF FPN DISAGREE ON MANNER OF PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS, WITH MNR FAVORING SEPARATE LIST FOR ITS CANDIDATES. END SUMMARY.

1. STUDENT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD THROUGHOUT BOLIVIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN LATTER HALF OF SEPTEMBER. THESE ELECTIONS CAME ABOUT BECAUSE OF PRESSURE BY STUDENT-ELECTED INTERFACULTY COMMITTEES ON BOLIVIAN UNIVERSITY CONFEDERATION (CUB) TO HOLD DEMOCRATIC ELECTION FOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP. THIS PRESSURE RESULTED IN CUB AGREEMENT WITH UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES LAST JULY TO HOLD STUDENT ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY CONTACTS IN UNIVERSITY OF SAN ANDRES IN LA PAZ, PARADOXICAL ASPECT OF PRE-ELECTION MANEUVERING WAS FACT THAT INTERFACULTY COMMITTEES ARE COMPOSED LARGELY OF MMRISTA STUDENT LEADERS, WHO IN TURN PUT PRESSURE ON MNR AND FSB LEADERS OF CUB TO FORCE HOLDING OF ELECTIONS.

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2. AT PRESENT, SENTIMENT WITHIN MNR IS STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF RUNNING SEPARATE MNR LIST FOR ALL ELECTIVE STUDENT OFFICES, SINCE PARTY IS CONFIDENT OF ELECTORAL SWEEP IF THIS PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED. PAZ ESTENSSORO REPORTEDLY FAVORS THIS METHOD WITHIN CONTEXT OF OPEN ELECTORAL PROCESS IN WHICH ALL POLITICAL GROUPS COULD COMPETE; ACCORDING TO SERGIO OTERO, MNR COORDINATOR FOR UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS, PAZ BELIEVES THAT ONLY CLEAN, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS WILL PRODUCE REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF STUDENT LEADERS SUPPORTED BY MASS OF STUDENT BODY. MOST OBSERVERS CONCUR IN VIEW THAT PRESENT GROUP OF CUB AND LOCAL UNIVERSITY FEDERATION (FUL) LEADERS LACK PRESTIGE AND SUPPORT AMONG STUDENT POPULACE, WHICH VIEWS CURRENT LEADERSHIP AS GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED FIGUREHEADS.

3. MNR DESIRE TO PRESENT ITS CANDIDATES SEPARATELY FROM THOSE OF FSB AND OTHER FPN ELEMENTS IS BEING OPPOSED BY REST OF FPN, AS WELL AS BY PRESIDENT BANZER HIMSELF. BANZER APPARENTLY REMAINS CONVINCED THAT FPN COALITION UNITY OF GREAT SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE, AND THUS MUST BE MAINTAINED EVEN WITHIN UNIVERSITY ELECTORAL CONTEXT. MNR, ON OTHER HAND, BELIEVES THAT ANY JOINT MNR-FSB SLATE WOULD BE ROUNDLY DEFEATED IN FORTHCOMING UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS. AT MOMENT, ISSUE REMAINS UNRESOLVED, ALTHOUGH MNR REPORTEDLY MET WITH BANZER AUGUST 31 IN ATTEMPT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON COMMON APPROACH TO THESE ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: BOTH BANZER AND MNR--FROM THEIR SEPARATE VIEWPOINTS--CONSIDER OUTCOME OF SEPTEMBER UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS TO BE KEY INDICATOR FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1974. THUS, EACH WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPROMISE ON ISSUE OF SEPARATE VERSUS JOINT LISTS: BANZER BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE WHICH HE ATTACHES TO UNITED SUPPORT BY FPN COALITION FOR HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY, AND MNR DUE TO POSSIBLE DESIRE BY PAZ ESTENSSORO TO RETAIN OPTION OF SEPARATE MNR LIST IN 1974 ELECTIONS.

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